



If Someone You Know is Abusive

Yes, it is your business. Maybe it's your friend, relative, co-worker, gym partner or fishing buddy. You've noticed that he/she interrupts, criticizes, yells at or scares his/her partner. You hope that when they're alone, it isn't worse.

You know what's happening isn't right, but you're afraid of making your friend mad. You certainly don't want to see anyone get hurt, end up in jail, or lose their family. What can you do?

Say something. If you don't, your silence is the same as saying abuse is ok. Because you care, you need to do something... before it's too late.

What Can You Say or Do?

Draw attention to it.

"Do you see the effect your bad words have on your partner?"

"Did you mean to be so rough? That's not cool."

Say what you think.

"I'm really worried about your spouse's safety."

"I care about you, but I won't tolerate it if you are abusive."

"This makes me really uncomfortable. It's not right."

Express ideas about respectful behavior.

"Listening to your partner is important."

"In loving relationships, both people feel safe to say what they're feeling."

Offer suggestions or solutions.

"Hitting your partner is never right."

"Kids learn from their parents. Is this how you want your son to treat women?"

"Call me if you feel like you're losing control."

"Maybe you should try counseling."

"You should talk to your faith leader and see what he/she suggests."

If the behavior is criminal, say so.

"Domestic violence is a crime. You could be arrested for this."

"You could end up in jail if you don't find a way to deal with your problems. Then what would happen to you and your family?"

You can make a difference. Your friend may not listen to what you have to say. He or she may get enraged, deny it, ignore you or make excuses. Your friend may blame his/her partner for the abuse, or even laugh it off or make fun of you. Still, you need to say something.

Speaking out can make a difference in your friend's life. When you decide that violence in relationships is unacceptable and choose to speak up, your friends will begin to think twice before they strike with their words or fists. It may not be easy or comfortable, but it's the right thing to do.

If you are concerned about the safety of your friend's partner or spouse, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224.